

Wildlife Management Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



February 2011

Note: The following reports have been contributed by staff from the WDNR wildlife management and research programs, is compiled and edited by Bill Vander Zouwen, and designed by Meaghan Proctor. This report is intended to raise awareness of DNR staff and stakeholders regarding wildlife management activities, accomplishments, challenges and plans. We are hoping that these reports will help build a broad coalition working toward our shared vision of producing abundant wildlife for all who appreciate how wildlife contributes to their quality of life.

Wildlife Statewide Training Meeting

Contributed by Helen Hartman

Staff from around the state attended the annual training meeting. Jim Martin, Conservation Director, Berkley Conservation, was the keynote speaker. The title of his talk was: "A Great Wave Rising: The Coming Crisis in Conservation in America", which incorporated the three big challenges facing wildlife management: 1) Increased habitat impacts from population increase and associated development; 2) climate change; and 3) the collapse, within 25 years from now, of sportsmen's funding as a basis for funding State Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Training sessions and presentations also included the following topics: climate change adaptation strategies, an overview of land management issues, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Plan, The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin Handbook, regional eco-summit reports, bird conservation, wildlife health, conservation of the Great Lakes, the proposed Lead Action Plan, grants, safety protocols, geographic information systems, species management, land management, forest certification, and invasive species management.

Wildlife Management Annual Awards

Contributed by Helen Hartman

The following awards were presented at the annual statewide wildlife training meeting in recognition of great service to the people and wildlife of Wisconsin:

Wildlife Leadership Award: **Don Bates**, Southeast Region Area Wildlife Supervisor -- "For his commitment to the conservation, promotion, and health of Wisconsin's wildlife resources, which is reflected in his outstanding ability to support and provide direction to his staff while working closely with the public and conservation organizations." Don has provided public service at the Poynette Game Farm, Wisconsin State Riverway, and currently as the CWD and Wildlife Area Supervisor. He is an exemplary leader of the Wildlife Management program and the agency as well as a trusted mentor to his wildlife field staff through the many chapters of his career.



L to R: Bureau Director Tom Hauge, Secretary Cathy Stepp, Don Bates, Executive Assistant Scott Gunderson



L to R: Bureau Director Tom Hauge, Secretary Cathy Stepp, Deb Weidert, Executive Assistant Scott Gunderson

Wildlife Technician Award: **Deb Weidert**, South-Central Region -- Deb has worked in the State Parks Program at the Richard Bong Recreation Area, Pike Lake State Park, and as Park Superintendent at Lake Kegonsa State Park. She transferred to the Bureau of Wildlife Management where she worked to enhance large-scale grasslands, wetlands, and oak savannas in Dane County and Horicon. Most recently she is working in the Glacial Habitat Restoration Area, where she is responsible for restoring rare ecosystems on properties throughout Dodge, Fond du Lac, and Columbia Counties.

Wildlife Biologist Award: Kay Brockman-Mederas, Northeast Region -- Kay advocates for using science and the best information available in making resource management decisions that will benefit all wildlife while managing our state lands. She has provided excellent service to both of our most important customers: our wildlife and other natural resources, and the public that enjoys those resources. Her wide-ranging interests include providing more hunting opportunities, mentoring new hunters, promoting migratory bird conservation, providing environmental and wildlife education, promoting No Child Left Indoors, protecting bottomland habitats and all the wildlife species using them, promoting wildlife conservation while actively participating in local land use planning, and so much more.



L to R: Bureau Director Tom Hauge, Secretary Cathy Stepp, Kay Brockman-Mederas, Executive Assistant Scott Gunderson

Special Service Awards were presented by the central office, regions, science service bureau, and endangered resources bureau:



Tom Watkins and Bureau Director Tom Hauge

Central Office recognition: Tom Watkins -- "In recognition of his valuable leadership and partnership in shaping master plans for state wildlife areas". Tom has positively shaped the master planning process for wildlife properties. His advice and counsel have been invaluable in the completion of the Glacial Heritage Area and Lower Chippewa River master plans and in the shaping of the Sandhill/Meadow Valley Work Unit, Lower Wolf, Columbia County, and Wetland Areas of the Northern Kettle Moraine Region master plans.

Northeast Region recognition: Green Bay Duck Hunters Association (GBDHA) -- "For your strong commitment to managing the waterfowl resources of the State of Wisconsin" The Green Bay Duck Hunters Association was founded in 1958 by concerned duck hunters who wanted to help establish a refuge for waterfowl. Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary in the City of Green Bay and Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve in the Town of Suamico owe their existence to this organization. These two facilities, now run by the city and county parks departments, provide hundreds of thousands of visitors a place to connect with wildlife every year. During the 1970s they created what has become known within the community as "Duck Rescue". They began rescuing ducklings caught in sewer grates and other urban hazards and are now monitoring urban nesting mallards to capture and move newly hatched broods to water. Thousands of ducklings have been rescued in several urban communities along the Fox River, with over 1,000 being moved in 2010 alone. They have partnered with the DNR for waterfowl banding. They have contributed a few thousand hours in the past 5 years to capture over 7,200 geese over a period of just 14 cumulative days. In addition, they assist Shawano Wildlife staff band wood ducks on Navarino and the Herb Behnke Unit of the Wolf River Bottomlands, and also band the adult hen mallards captured during their Duck Rescue project. They hold an annual youth waterfowl



Representatives of the Green Bay Duck Hunters Association with Regional Wildlife Supervisor Jeff Pritzl

day each August, which draws around 60 kids and their parents for hands-on activities. Last fall, they began sponsoring a Learn to Hunt event as well. They release loosestrife beetles to wetlands infested with purple loosestrife. From an interest in waterfowl habitat and harvest opportunities to conservation education, the Green Bay Duck Hunters Association is one organization that will benefit the state of Wisconsin for many years to come.

Southeast Region recognition: **Camp Y-Koda Outdoor Skills and Education** (Branch of the Sheboygan County YMCA), -- Jeremiah Dentz and Sarah Dezwarte: "In appreciation for your continuing efforts and accomplishments in outdoor education." Camp Y-Koda is located on 80 acres on the Sheboygan River. In addition to the normal array of outdoor and nature-based youth camp activities, Camp Y-Koda operates one of Wisconsin's most innovative and successful outdoor education programs. For over 30 years it has provided a wide variety of hands-on outdoor educational programs, which now reach over 4,700 pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students per year. The Outdoor Skills signature program is their unique Wetland Ecology Program. Since the start of this program in the early 90s, they have led over 18,000 students out of classrooms and into Sheboygan Marsh and Kiel Marsh Wildlife Areas to "get their feet wet" in a wetland ecosystem. The Sponsor-A-Classroom Program, started in 2006, sponsors classes from local schools that lack environmental studies and brings them out to the Camp to participate in the nature-based programs; thus far, over 8,000 students from twenty-seven schools have been sponsored with over \$26,000 in donations from area businesses, foundations, and SCCA.



Acting Regional Wildlife Supervisor Dale Katsma and Sarah Dezwarte

South-Central Region recognition: **Dane County Chapter of the Ice Age Alliance** -- "The Ice Age Trail Habitat Crew is recognized for outstanding contributions to restoring native prairie and oak woodlands on the Lodi Marsh Wildlife Area". The alliance, led by Gary Werner, Jon Bishop and Tom Wise, has provided support to the Lodi Marsh, including developing a community-based approach which reaches well beyond the boundaries of the property. Their work entails restoring native prairie, oak savanna and southern oak-hickory forests. They work side-by-side with Wildlife staff doing such things as prescribed burning, restoring forgotten goat prairies choked by cedar, and developing additional restoration projects by evaluating habitat needs of the property. They help write grants and develop management plans that see long-term, big-picture, conservation potential beyond the wildlife area boundary.



Regional Wildlife Supervisor Eric Lobner and Maureen Rowe

West-Central Region recognition: **Joseph Stecker-Kochanski**, Park Supervisor at Buckhorn and Roche-a-Cri State Parks -- "In recognition of your dedicated service to the promotion of Wisconsin's wildlife heritage". Joseph has gone well beyond providing typical state park offerings for Buckhorn visitors. He has broadened and increased visitor opportunities for the appreciation, education, and interaction with wildlife and wildlife habitat. In 1998, Joe initiated the Buckhorn Youth/Novice Learn to Deer Hunt at Buckhorn State Park, which has allowed about 700 novice hunters and their mentors to gun deer hunt on Buckhorn State Park and Wildlife Area. He has led his staff to deploy about 50 volunteers to

plan and assist with the training sessions and weekend hunts. Joe's ongoing project to restore several hundred acres of oak savanna habitat is a result of funds he secured from DNR Turkey Stamp, the Nelson Trust, Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Buckhorn State Park Friends Group, Stewardship Fund, and the Lemonweir Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. In addition, the Challenge Academy at Fort McCoy contributed lots of labor toward the restoration. UW-Extension donated graphic artist assistance to design and manufacture interpretive panels which explain savanna ecology to park visitors. This is a stellar example of securing and extending scarce matching funds by coupling them with inexpensive labor to achieve habitat improvements. He guided the establishment of a nature interpretive room with many hands-on displays, a new amphitheater, the placement of numerous bluebird houses and several osprey platforms throughout the park which provide visitors with first-rate wildlife viewing opportunities, a 2-level accessible wildlife blind, an accessible fishing pier, a children's fishing pond, and waterfowl hunting blinds. Joe is a long-time hunter education instructor, conducting 2 classes annually to assist students in acquiring proper hunter safety training. Joe is also an active member of KAMO – Kids And Mentors Outdoors, where he recently organized a youth Learn to Hunt deer program at the Mackenzie Center at Poynette.



Joseph Stecker-Kochanski and Regional Wildlife Supervisor Kris Belling

Endangered Resources Program 2010 Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation Award: Marty Johnson
 -- Marty Johnson demonstrates outstanding contributions toward the protection of Wisconsin's biological diversity. Marty is a Wildlife Biologist stationed in Sturtevant, with responsibility for Racine, Kenosha, and part of Milwaukee Counties. In addition to his wildlife-related duties, Marty has done much to further the goals of the Endangered Resources Program, both at the species and natural community



L to R: Bureau Director Tom Hauge, Secretary Cathy Stepp, Marty Johnson, Executive Assistant Scott Gunderson

levels. Marty is the property manager for five State Natural Areas (SNA) including Chiwaukee Prairie, one of the most biologically diverse sites in Wisconsin and a keystone of the SNA system. This 460-acre site contains more than 400 species of vascular plants, 10 of which are listed as endangered or threatened. A host of rare amphibians, reptiles, birds, invertebrates, and mammals also inhabit the natural area. Marty has been a tireless advocate for Chiwaukee Prairie and the State Natural Areas Program for more than 14 years. Marty not only gets physically involved at Chiwaukee through conducting prescribed burns and eradicating invasive species, he also helped secure nearly \$500,000 for SNA work over the last 5 years alone. Some of his grant awards include a \$30,000 Wisconsin Coastal Management Grant for restoration and a \$30,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant. Recently, Marty successfully partnered with others to secure \$2 million in federal money from the Great

Lakes Restoration Initiative of which \$275,000 will come to Chiwaukee Prairie for invasive species control and hydrological restoration. In addition to Marty's achievements in land management and grant administration, he has also been very successful acquiring land at Chiwaukee Prairie. For those not familiar with this property, it was platted into hundreds of tiny lots decades ago, most of which were not built on. Over the years, Marty has been assembling Chiwaukee a quarter-acre at a time. We now own more than 606 lots, covering more than 92% of the acquirable land thanks to Marty's efforts.

That's a lot of land transactions!

Bureau of Science Services Award: John Olson -- The BSS recognizes John for his outstanding contributions from the Wildlife Management Program. He has strong roots in Wildlife Management as a biologist, area supervisor, and now as a statewide specialist. Throughout his career he has been a strong advocate for science-based management of our natural resources. He has been a cooperator, an innovator, and a coalition builder; he is well respected by internal and external peers and is an all around great person. John has been an important advocate and cooperator in much, if not all, of the furbearer research and monitoring activities conducted in Wisconsin during the past 15+ years. John has been a leader in international research to develop best management practices for trapping. John has successfully built a group of DNR personnel, citizens and researchers to advance furbearer research and management. His ability to pull people together around a common cause has resulted in many productive collaborations. I'll end with a quote from one of the nominators "It could be said that John Olson is responsible for getting furbearers the attention and respect they deserve in Wisconsin."



John Olson sporting a bear scat bolo tie

Staff Notes

New Faces in the Wildlife Health Program

Contributed by Tami Ryan

Wildlife Veterinarian, Dr. Lindsey Long -- Lindsey started just last week and many staff met her at our statewide conference. Lindsey received her B.S. in Biology and Chemistry in 1999 from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin where she had her first introduction to the WDNR as a member of the Wolf Research Team. She continued her education at the Ohio State University, College of Veterinary Medicine graduating in 2003. In 2005, Lindsey returned to the Ohio State University to pursue a PhD in the Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine with an emphasis in Epidemiology. In 2010, she earned Diplomate status in the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine.

Lindsey is extremely excited to be joining the Wildlife Health Team. She has broad interests in the wildlife/domestic disease interface, particularly in evaluating spatial distribution of animals in the terms of disease transmission (including mapping vector distribution), human habitation, forage and water availability, and public health initiatives. She looks forward to being involved in projects that evaluate and integrate wildlife health and research to that of community health.

Lindsey is an avid outdoor recreationist and enjoys hiking, biking, and winter sports. She also has the unique distinction of undergoing three marriage ceremonies to her husband.

Lindsey's outlook on her new position: "Emerging infectious diseases are of great concern in both wildlife and human populations. I look forward to joining the Wildlife Health Team and working with other members in the broader community in joint efforts to understand the epidemiology of both existing and emerging diseases, and to subsequently develop appropriate action plans. Diseases such as chronic wasting disease, viral hemorrhagic septicemia, and white nose syndrome are just three members of such a list and illustrate why conservation medicine has become more recognized for its importance. I am



excited to be one more addition to the already active conservation medicine community in Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region."

Wildlife Health Data Coordinator, Erin Larson -- This is a new position in the Wildlife Health Section, yet Erin has been a long-standing member of our wildlife family. Erin earned her B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. She has continued her education by taking additional courses in Information Technology and data management. She began working for the DNR in 2004 and has been working in the wildlife health section since 2005.

In her spare time, Erin likes to spend time with her family, husband Sayer, their toddler Sawyer, and German Shorthair Brodie.

Erin's outlook on her new position: "I have been fortunate to have been doing many of the duties pertaining to the database position for a few years now, so when I accepted the wildlife health database position there wasn't a huge learning curve, just lots of work! Several of the items I am looking forward to for the coming year are as follows: finishing the annual report application for the wildlife rehabilitators to use to directly enter in their annual reports instead of sending us hard copies, finishing the necropsy submission application for folks to also directly enter in their submissions into the wildlife health database, working with the rest of the wildlife health team to make the wildlife health web pages more user friendly, and finally, just making sure we are collecting the data the best we can. With technology constantly changing there are always updates and changes to make which keeps this job interesting!"



Wildlife Rehabilitation Liaison, Mandy Cyr -- Mandy has moved into the Wildlife Rehabilitation Liaison role with the Wildlife Health Section since her previous introduction back in August as our new Wildlife Health Assistant. Mandy previously worked for the wildlife health section in 2007 where her main focus was primarily on CWD research. In 2010, she completed her master's degree at UW-Stevens Point where she focused on wildlife health. She is originally from the Fox Cities area and enjoys visiting the Northwoods for fishing, camping, and many other outdoor activities.

Mandy's outlook on her new position: "Throughout the years I have interned, worked, and volunteered at a couple of wildlife rehabilitation centers here in Wisconsin. Captive wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation have always been a strong interest of mine and I am excited to be involved once again with these programs."

Wildlife Health Assistant, Melissa Clark -- Melissa will started her new job on January 25th. She attended of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she double majored in wildlife ecology and zoology. While in college, she was employed at the National Wildlife Health Center located in Madison, Wisconsin and volunteered for the Wisconsin DNR. After graduation, Melissa worked for the University of Florida as a wildlife and laboratory technician, where she gained an interest in studying and working with wildlife and infectious diseases. She was accepted into the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine graduate program and earned her Masters degree in veterinary medical sciences. Melissa is an avid photographer and enjoys hiking and outdoor activities. She is thrilled to re-join the Badger nation.



Melissa's outlook on her new position: "Working for the Department of Natural Resources has been a

goal of mine since my first wildlife ecology course. I am excited to further my knowledge and become part of the Wisconsin DNR."

New Land Management Systems Coordinator, Jeff Walters

Contributed by Jeff Walters

Jeff says: As Land Management Systems Coordinator, my ultimate goal is to provide a series of tools related to land management activities that will allow our staff to perform their jobs in a more efficient manner. This will save time, money and ease stressed workloads. By building a single robust system, we will have the ability to capture key information, which will aid in making informed decisions on land management activities.

The intent is to create a consistent workflow for staff to carry out with various land management activities. This would include more automated processes that would enable staff to key information early on in the process and build off of that information as the land management work is accomplished. This will reduce time spent filling out forms and reduce chance for error. With a significant number of staff reaching retirement, it is essential we capture and distill their expertise and implement it in a reliable and repeatable process. This will allow new staff to more easily acquaint themselves with the activities that were on-going in the property they are now responsible for.



2011 SPRING FISH AND WILDLIFE HEARINGS

Contributed by Scott Loomans

Spring Hearing Proposals

At its January, 2011 meeting, the natural resources board approved wildlife management's spring hearing agenda. In 2011, the department will ask advisory questions to gauge support for new duck hunting zone configurations and for lowering the age at which anyone can use a crossbow from 65 to 55. The following rule changes are proposed:

- Repeal the sunset of a trial period for the extended fall turkey hunting season.
- Extend each of the six consecutive spring turkey hunting seasons by two days.
- Eliminate the archery deer season closure during the traditional November firearm season.
- Repeal the requirement that elk hunters must wear blaze orange.
- Establish a September elk season that would run concurrently with the first 30 days of the archery deer season.
- Allow a landowner, lessee or occupant of private land or other person with landowner permission to kill a cougar that is attacking a domestic animal.

- Allow normal hunting hours for pheasants on weekends at stocked 2:00 p.m. closure properties.
- Require that bear hunters provide carcass tissue samples, if requested, to the department at registration.
- Allows rifles for deer hunting in Waupaca County.
- Establish firearm and muzzleloader deer seasons at Copper Falls State Park.
- Include Manitowoc, Pierce and St. Croix in the list of counties where the discharge of firearms is prohibited on department lands except while hunting.

More information can be found here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/nrboard/2011/January/01-11-3B4.pdf>

Also, the Conservation Congress shared the advisory proposals/questions that will be on their side of the agenda:

- Division of Bear Management Zone C
- Legalize crossbows for archery season
- Use of archery equipment with a gun deer license
- Legalize rifles for hunting deer statewide

- Increase rifle hunting area in Shawano County
 - Allow trapping and hunting on state park lands
 - Cable restraints on private lands
 - Shorten fall beaver trapping season
 - Initiate study to define effects of dog training on nesting birds
 - Night hunting of raccoons during the 9-day gun deer season
 - Bear hunting with dogs statewide
 - Wolf control
 - Change open water rule modification for disabled hunters
 - Definition of vehicle for transportation of weapons
 - Unattended decoys on private lands
 - Remove 15 day requirement for permit transfers
 - Disabled veteran's recreational card
 - Increase archery license by \$1 for youth archery and bow hunting training programs
 - Dog access regulations at badger ordinance site
 - Exempt all buildings from 100 yard firearm discharge prohibition while on Public lands
 - Metal detecting on state lands
 - Turkey permit preference for Wisconsin state residents
 - Open fall crow season earlier
- More information can be found here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/nrboard/2011/January/01-11-3B5.pdf>
- And the Natural Resources Board added two of their own:
- Use of non-toxic shot on department lands
 - Restrict deer baiting and feeding ten days before and during the traditional 9-day firearm season
- Spring hearings are held on the second Monday in April every year. In 2011, that is April 11.

Farm Bill Policies and Wildlife

Contributed by Missy Sparrow and Sharon Fandel

VPA-HIP "Open Fields"

The DNR would like to thank partners for their valuable support of Wisconsin's involvement in the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP). Wisconsin was awarded \$936,040 for the first year of the program. The first step toward accessing the funding is to satisfy the Farm Services Agency (FSA) requirement for a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). We, along with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and several of the other VPA-HIP states have been waiting for FSA to decide if we are required to do a full Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) or if we are allowed to use existing environmental assessments for similar work through other federal agencies. In a recent conference call with FSA, AFWA and the VPA-HIP states were informed that all states must conduct a programmatic environmental assessment. However, the process we need to follow is not as cumbersome as we once thought. We are in the process of getting our PEA together and plan to submit it soon. Once the PEA is accepted by FSA, we will receive the federal funding.

In concert with the work on the PEA we are also taking the first steps toward implementing the program. The three initial steps we are working on are: 1) hire a program coordinator (this position plus four field positions are funded in the grant); 2) write a landowner agreement template; and 3) draft an implementation plan from the results of staff input.

As soon as we have our funding secured and a sound implementation plan in place, we would like to meet with partner group representatives again. Partners will be briefed on our implementation plan to secure private lands for public access for the next three years. Partner ability to get the word out to interested landowners and hunters is a valuable piece to the success of this program. We will have the opportunity to talk together about the program, about the goals, and about what possibilities exist to help the program succeed.

UPLAND GAME PROGRAM

Contributed by Sharon Fandel and Krista McGinley

New Upland Wildlife Ecologist

The new year brings with it many challenges and opportunities in the Upland Wildlife program, and also a new face. The Wisconsin DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management is happy to announce the hiring of the new Upland Wildlife Ecologist and Farm Bill Staff Specialist, Scott Walter (the position was vacated in early 2010 by Scott Hull, who remains an integral part of the team as the new Upland Wildlife Research Scientist). Scott Walter was raised in southern Wisconsin, and currently resides on his 6-generation family farm in Richland County with his wife, Erica, and their five children. He received his B.S. in Biology from Beloit College, and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from UW-Madison. He brings with him a strong interest in upland game bird management and is excited to apply this interest to the management of Wisconsin's upland wildlife and their habitats. If you have questions for Scott, he can be reached at (608) 267-7861 or Scott.Walter@Wisconsin.gov.

Spring Turkey Season on the horizon

As the new year begins, we look toward another great year of spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin! The preference drawing for the spring 2011 turkey season was just completed, and more than 145,500 permits were issued out of the 225,729 total available. Hunters can expect excellent opportunities to enjoy the spring woods in pursuit of a wild turkey.

Those interested in hunting turkeys this spring need not have applied through the preference drawing. The 80,000 remaining permits will be issued for sale on first-come, first-served basis, one zone per day, starting on March 21st and following the schedule below (note that there are no leftover permits available for Zone 7 after the preference drawing, or for the first two time periods in all other zones). Hunters will be able to purchase one permit per day, beginning on the day noted below for their zone of choice.

Zone 1: Monday, March 21st

Zone 2: Tuesday, March 22nd

Zone 3: Wednesday, March 23rd

Zone 4: Thursday, March 24th

Zones 5 and 6: Friday, March 25th

Any remaining leftover permits for all zones will go on sale Saturday, March 26th, and will continue to be sold until the available permits run out or the season ends. Details regarding the availability of tags in specific units can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cs/springturkey/>.

The spring 2011 turkey hunting season will run from April 13th through May 22nd. The season is divided into six 5-day time periods, each of which runs from Wednesday through Sunday. A total of 7 zones, 15 state parks, and Fort McCoy will be open for hunting. The Spring Turkey Youth Hunt, now in its fifth year, will take place on April 9th and 10th, the weekend before the opening Wednesday of the regular season. This hunt offers youth the opportunity to experience the excitement of turkey hunting outside of the regular season and is open to youth ages 12-15 who have already completed Hunter Education and are accompanied by an adult aged 18 or older. Thanks to the Mentored Hunting Program that took effect in the fall of 2009, youth hunters aged 10 and 11 may now also participate in the 2011 Youth Turkey Hunt without having first completed Hunter Education, as long as they do so with a qualified adult mentor and follow the rules laid out under the laws of the program. Each youth must have a valid spring 2011 turkey harvest permit, license, and Wild Turkey Stamp. If unsuccessful during the Youth Hunt, youth hunters may use their permit in the zone and time period for which it was issued. For more information, visit the Youth Hunt website and the Mentored Hunting Program website.

Free Turkey Hunter Education Clinics will again be offered this year. Clinics will take place from late February through early April. More information, as well as a listing of the dates and locations for each clinic, is now available online at the DNR's Wild Turkey page.

Potential Turkey and Pheasant Hunting Season Changes

Contributed by Scott Walter, Sharon Fandel, and Krista McGinley

A number of potential changes to upland wildlife hunting seasons may be of interest to wild turkey and pheasant hunters. Turkey hunters should be aware that the Fall 2010 turkey season was the last for the pilot program extended season in Zones 1-5, which ran from the day after the close of the 9-day gun deer season through December 31st. Based on hunter support for this extended hunt, as well as its likely negligible impact on Wisconsin's turkey population, the DNR Turkey Management Committee has recommended that this extended season structure be adopted permanently. The question will be presented to the public during the Conservation Congress spring hearings, held on April 11th in each county throughout the state. If supported there and approved by the Natural Resources Board, this extended turkey hunting opportunity will become a fixture in Wisconsin, offering turkey hunters more days afield. Another significant potential rule change would add two days of hunting to each of the six regular time periods of the spring turkey season. Under this framework, each time period would open on Wednesday (same as the current season structure) and continue through the following Tuesday. This question will also be put to a vote during April's Conservation Congress hearings. Finally, a third change which has already been approved will take effect in the spring of 2012, when two new State Park Hunting Zones (Hartman Creek and Straight Lake) will be open for turkey hunting.

For years, the pheasant season has been closed daily at 2:00 p.m. at select stocked public hunting grounds during the first couple weeks of the pheasant season. Given recent discussion on this issue, the Department has proposed closing the season at the end of normal hunting hours on the weekend days on public hunting grounds affected by the 2:00 p.m. closure. This change would afford pheasant hunters more enjoyable hours afield.

Individuals interested in weighing in on these

issues relating to Wisconsin's upland wildlife hunting seasons are encouraged to attend the Conservation Congress hearings in their county. Times and locations for the hearings in each county will be announced soon.

Turkey and Pheasant Stamp funding

Management activities which create and improve upland wildlife habitat in Wisconsin are funded largely by hunters, through revenues generated by the annual sales of Wild Turkey and Pheasant Stamps. Applications for habitat projects are submitted by DNR staff, conservation organizations, and other units of government every two years at the start of the DNR's budget cycle, and are reviewed by a panel of experienced biologists and partner groups on the DNR Turkey and Pheasant Committees in order to allocate available funds most effectively.

The sale of the Wild Turkey Stamp annually generates close to \$750,000 for habitat management, outreach and education, and research related to Wisconsin's wild turkeys. The successful reintroduction and expansion of turkeys throughout the state, as well as our ability to manage their numbers responsibly using information gathered from harvest and research data, is due in large part to the availability of these funds. Habitat work related to turkeys consists largely of restoring or creating habitat important to turkeys throughout their life cycle.

Pheasant Stamp dollars are applied directly to on-the-ground habitat management efforts as well as to support pheasant propagation efforts at the State Game Farm in Poynette. Staff at the Game Farm breed and raise around 50,000 ring-necked pheasants each year, which are then released on public hunting grounds throughout the state, increasing opportunities for pheasant hunters who lack access to wild birds on private lands. This program also serves to provide pheasant hunting opportunities during periods when wild pheasant populations are low, as is currently the case following a series of wet springs and hard winters.



As we are now at the beginning of the funding process for Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013, applications are being accepted for Wild Turkey, Pheasant, and Waterfowl Stamp projects. Updated project application guidance materials and application form have been reviewed by the DNR Wild Turkey, Pheasant, and Migratory Game Bird Management Committees and have received the approval of the Wildlife Policy Team. Information about the funding process has been posted to the DNR website. Interested applicants will be able to submit project proposals through March 28th, 2011. DNR staff, non-profit conservation organizations, and other units of government are all eligible and encouraged to apply.

Stamp Funds Available for Habitat Work

Contributed by Krista McGinley, Scott Walter, and Ricky Lien

Applications to fund habitat work by conservation organizations and government agencies to benefit wild turkeys, pheasants, and waterfowl are now available from the Department of Natural Resources. The applications are due March 28, 2011, for work to be done in 2012 and 2013.

Funds raised through the sale of wild turkey, pheasant, and waterfowl stamps and a portion of the Conservation Patron license are made available to conservation organizations and units of government as well as department staff. Eligibility information and criteria, application guidance, and more information can be found on each of the species pages on the DNR website at dnr.wi.gov. Funds may be used only for developing, managing, preserving, restoring, and maintaining the wild turkey, pheasant, and waterfowl populations and their habitat in the state.

"Since their inception, millions of dollars of wild turkey, pheasant, and waterfowl stamp funds have been awarded to conduct habitat management, research, and outreach that benefits the species, their habitat, and the people who enjoy hunting and viewing them," said Scott Walter, the Department of Natural Resources upland wildlife ecologist. "These funds have been instrumental in providing critical habitat and species management across the state."

Currently, 60 percent of pheasant stamp funds

are directed to the State Game Farm, which annually produces pheasants for release on public hunting grounds. The program provides additional pheasant hunting opportunities for bird hunting enthusiasts. One-third of waterfowl stamp funds is directed to Canada in a cooperative species management effort that preserves waterfowl habitat and benefits Wisconsin hunters.

"All Wisconsin residents have benefitted from the waterfowl habitat work that has been funded by the sale of Wisconsin waterfowl stamps," said Ricky Lien, DNR's wetland habitat specialist. "Wetland habitat work accomplished through the money raised by waterfowl stamps not only benefits hunters but also provides waterfowl watching opportunities for non-hunters, provides clean water, and helps to control flooding by slowing the release of floodwaters."

A stamp is required to hunt wild turkeys, pheasants, and waterfowl in the state of Wisconsin. Many stamp collectors also purchase the stamps, and stamp design contests are held each August to determine the design of the upcoming license year's stamps. On average, the wildlife stamps receive annual revenues exceeding \$300,000 for pheasant, \$750,000 for wild turkey, and \$550,000 for waterfowl.

Permit Systems and Information Technology

The Wildlife Management program, in conjunction with Customer Service and Licensing, completed the annual Spring Turkey Drawing, and with the cooperation of Department of Administration's Print Shop, printed and mailed 145,523 postcard notifications. Most of these postcards were mailed bulk-rate at a considerable savings to the program. Similarly, Wildlife Management successfully completed the 2011 Bear Harvest Permit drawing, and is in the process of printing and mailing 9,005 notifications to successful applicants.

Work continues to complete the purchase of new computers and the surplus of old computers, in preparation for the pending installation of new operating system and office suite.

Contributed by Tim Weiss

Contributed by Jane Riley

State Wildlife Grants (SWG)

Congress created the State Wildlife Grants Program to provide funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for the management of non-game species to prevent species and habitats from becoming endangered. Wisconsin's 2011-2013 State Wildlife Grants were awarded in January. Of the 23 funded projects, the Bureau of Wildlife Management received nearly \$200,000 of federal funding for five projects. The habitat-focused project areas are along the Mississippi River, at the Oakfield Ledge State Natural Area in Fond du Lac County, at the Tiffany Wildlife Area and the Tiffany Bottoms State Natural Area in Buffalo County, in the Southern Kettle Moraine, and Mukwonago River watershed. Wildlife's one species-focused project is a statewide project to monitor marshbirds, owls, and nightjars. The projects will begin in July 2011. For further information on the 2011-2013 Wisconsin State Wildlife Grant projects go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/swg/projects.htm>.

Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (NRF)

The Bureau of Wildlife Management received a gift of \$425 from the NRF and the Wisconsin Public Service Foundation in support of repairing osprey nesting platforms in Oneida and/or Forest counties.

In their 2011-2012 fundraising efforts, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin will include two areas of focus for Wildlife Management. The areas of focus will be the Important Bird Area program's Southern Forest Initiative (\$10,000 grant) and surveys of declining bird groups. We are also hoping the NRF will have the capacity to add the Greater Prairie Chicken and Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area Multimedia Outreach to their fund raising priority list, but that has yet to be determined. The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin website can be found at www.wisconservation.org.

National Archery in the Schools Program

The year 2011 has started up right where 2010 had left off! We have held 5 NASP Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) trainings so far this month (January) with 4 more scheduled in late January and

February in various schools across the state. Teachers from Superior to Fall River to Milwaukee were certified on January 15th. Currently, NASP is

being offered in over 270 schools statewide. I am working with several more to raise the funds needed to purchase the NASP equipment.

We have NASP style tournaments set for January 28th -30th in Eau

Claire at the Northern Deer and Turkey Show, on February

5th at the Badger State Olympic Games in Wausau, on March

5th at the Wisconsin Bowhunters Convention in Appleton, and

on March 19th at Poynette Bowhunters in Poynette. Our NASP

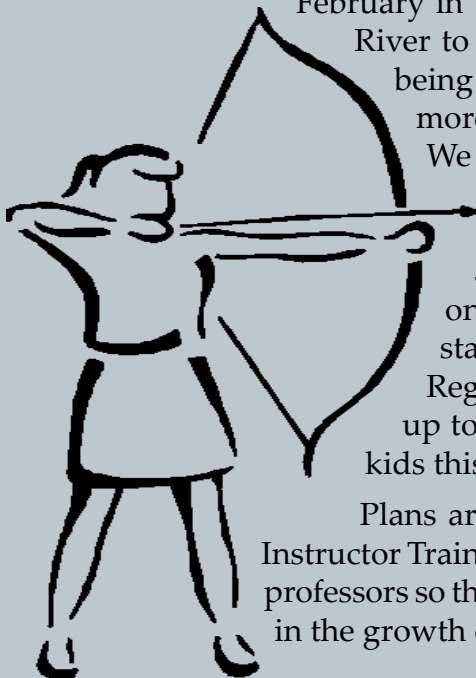
state tournament is set for April 1st and 2nd in Wisconsin Rapids.

Registration opened on January 5th, and we have over 400 kids signed

up to participate at this year's event. We are anticipating 800 to 1000 kids this year.

Plans are in the works to hold another three day NASP Basic Archery Instructor Trainer (BAIT) class at UW-Oshkosh this summer. Training the college professors so they can train the future Physical Education teachers has been huge in the growth of NASP not only in Wisconsin but all across the country.

Submitted by Dan Schroeder



DEER PROGRAM

New Youth Antlerless Deer Tag

Contributed by Scott Loomans

As part of the 2010 Spring Fish and Game Rules Hearing, the public voted in favor of providing a free statewide antlerless deer carcass tag to each person age 10 -17 with each gun deer license they purchase. Effective February 1, 2011, all gun deer licenses issued to youth ages 10 through 17 will include an antlerless deer carcass tag which is valid in any Deer Management Unit statewide, including regular or non-quota (buck only) units. For individuals ages 10 -17, this new statewide antlerless deer tag will replace the Herd Control deer carcass tag that formerly had been issued with their gun deer license. This statewide antlerless deer carcass tag is not weapon specific and may be filled during any open deer season with the appropriate license and corresponding weapon (firearm or archery). Adults purchasing a gun deer license will continue to be issued an antlerless deer carcass tag which is valid only in Herd Control and Earn-a-Buck units.

Now that each youth will automatically receive a free statewide antlerless deer carcass tag with their gun deer license, the department will no longer be issuing the free antlerless deer carcass tag that had been available to all first year Wisconsin Hunter Education Course graduates in the year they completed the class. Adults who are first year graduates will no longer receive this free statewide

antlerless deer carcass tag. Adults will continue to receive the normal free Herd Control tag with each archery or gun deer license they purchase, or can purchase unit specific antlerless deer carcass tags for \$12 (residents) or \$20 (nonresidents) if available. Wisconsin resident adults and youth will continue to be able to use their certificate of completion of a Wisconsin Hunter Education Course in place of a small game license during the license year they completed the course.

Winter Severity Index and Deer

Contributed by Mike Zeckmeister

State wildlife staff are again monitoring the effects of winter on the state's northern deer herd using a system known as the Winter Severity Index – and so far, things look pretty good. The index uses a combination and accumulation of cold temperatures and deep snows that historically have proven to affect the health and population of deer.

Biologists and other department staff add the number of days with daily low temperatures below zero degrees Fahrenheit and the number of days with 18 inches or more of snow on the ground. Up to 50 combined points at the end of the winter is considered mild, from 51 to 80 is considered moderate, 81 and over is considered severe, and any totals over 100 points are considered very severe.

To date, most of northern Wisconsin has snow depths that allow good deer movement, according to Mike Zeckmeister, Department of Natural Resources northern region wildlife biologist.

“About half of our stations are reporting winter points over 20, the other half are 20 or less,” Zeckmeister said. “What stands out this winter is



Jake Dingel/PGC Photo

that it started early. We have had below average low temperatures, and snow depths have hovered below the 18-inch reporting level at many stations up to the end of January."

Zeckmeister said that with a little more snow, most stations will be adding snow days to their reporting. "Depending on what happens for the rest of the winter, we could go either way. We will factor all of this in, including the final Winter Severity, when we set deer quotas later this spring," he said.

Wisconsin Deer Donation Program 2010

Contributed by Laurie Fike

The 2010 Wisconsin Deer Donation Program ended the season with a final tally of 3,620 donated deer. Almost one-third of the deer were harvested and donated in the CWD Zone; a total of 1,109 deer. Through their generous donations, hunters provided over 650,000 meals to needy families across the state. In 2010, 59 counties and 132 venison processors participated in the program. Currently, about one-third of the licensed meat processors in the state participate in the deer donation program.

While 2010 ended with the lowest tally in the 11-year history of the program, we did hear of many hunters donating deer directly to neighbors and family, whose numbers aren't counted in our program tally. For comparison, the 2009 and 2001 seasons both yielded 3,921 deer and the next lowest year was 2002 at 5,646 deer. Our record year was 2006 which yielded 11,848 deer. Buck-only units and fewer available antlerless bonus tags likely contributed to lower numbers in 2010.

Besides the time and effort involved in donating deer, hunters also made cash donations for venison processing when they purchased their hunting licenses; these donations totaled over 11,000 dollars.

Venison processors are paid \$55 per deer to process the carcass into ground venison, which is then packaged into 1 or 2 pound packages. A huge network of volunteers, consisting of civic groups, church groups, and pantry volunteers, coordinate distribution of the venison from the processors to the food pantries at no cost to the program. There is no charge to the hunter for donating a deer.

In the CWD Zone, the Target Hunger program helps coordinate the venison donation program.

Target Hunger is comprised of a group of southern Wisconsin community action groups including: Southwest CAP – Dodgeville, Central Wisconsin CAC – Wisconsin Dells, CAC for South Central Wisconsin – Madison, and Community Action – Janesville.

Target Hunger also pays CWD Zone processors an additional \$10 per deer to batch and track the deer until all CWD tests are confirmed negative before the venison is packaged for food pantries.

Over the past 11 years, hunters have donated over 77,000 deer, which have provided over 3.4 million pounds of ground venison to food pantries statewide. Wisconsin deer hunters have made the Wisconsin Deer Donation program the best in the nation!

Elk Capture and Assisted Dispersal

Contributed by Mike Zeckmeister

Wildlife staff caught 96 elk (including recaptures) at two trap locations near Clam Lake this winter. Staff collared 25 cows, 8 bulls, and 7 calves for herd monitoring purposes. Eight cows and 4 bulls were moved to a translocation pen in an area that elk have not yet dispersed to. This new area is within the suitable range identified in the state elk management plan. An additional translocation is planned for next winter.

Deer Harvest for the 2010-11 Seasons

Gun deer hunters killed and registered 252,740 deer during the 2010 deer season. This was a 4% increase over the 2009 gun harvest. Gun hunters saw a 14% increase in the number of antlered bucks killed. Archers killed 83,513 deer during the 2010 deer season. While there was a 4% decrease in total archery harvest from 2009, archery antlered buck kill rose 1%, making 2010 the 4th highest archery buck kill on record. Deer hunters also reported seeing more deer in 2010 than in 2009. On the Deer Hunter Wildlife Survey, hunters reported seeing 0.28 deer per hour hunted in 2010, whereas they reported 0.19 deer per hour in 2009. All regions of the state saw an increase in 2010 from 2009 levels in the number of deer seen per hour hunted.

Contributed by Brian Dhuey

Contributed by Jessica Kitchell and Sciences Services staff

Non-forest Biomass Guidelines

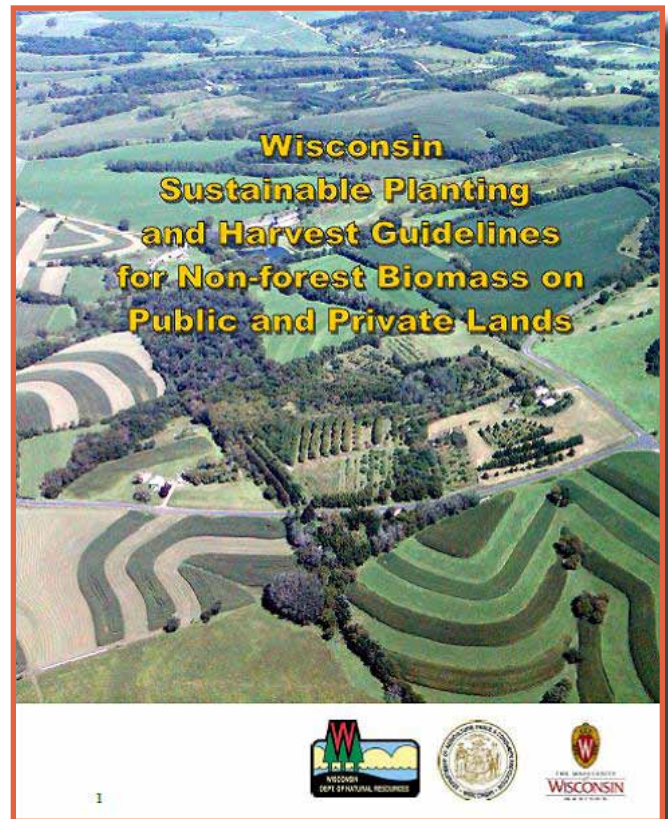
In August 2009, an effort to develop voluntary guidelines for the planting and harvest of non-forest biomass on Wisconsin's landscapes was initiated. Development of the guidelines builds on work completed by numerous other agencies and research teams, including the Wisconsin Council on Forestry and guidelines developed by other states. In November 2009, a technical team made up of biologists, researchers, policy analysts, land managers, and administrators in Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP), and the University of Wisconsin (UW) was assembled to develop the guidelines. Simultaneously, an executive committee made up of administrators was formed to provide guidance to the technical team and ultimately to approve the draft guidelines.

Intended Audience -- These guidelines cover multiple biomass feed-stocks from a broad perspective. They are intended to facilitate informed decision-making about the growing and harvesting of non-forest biomass across Wisconsin for a diverse audience, from producers to policymakers. The Executive Report provides specific guidelines for non-forest biomass establishment and harvest while the full report provides the background behind those recommendations.

Purpose and organization of the Guidelines -- This document does three things: 1) it provides an overview of the implications and issues of future bioenergy/biomass programs in Wisconsin at broad scales; 2) it provides a summary of the science and rationale used to produce the specific guidelines; and 3) it provides practical recommendations for site level implementation of biomass crops.

There are 3 main chapters in the report. Chapter 1 includes the document outline and organization along with the guiding principles used in developing the report. Chapter 2 contains an overview of sustainability and ecological concepts that build the framework of sustainable biomass production. The information in Chapter 2 should be useful for addressing the questions What biomass crop should I grow or harvest?, where should I grow or harvest this biomass?, and what information do I need to make sustainable and ecologically sound decisions?. Chapter 2 concludes with a list of guidelines applicable across all non-forest biomass types. Chapter 3 contains guidelines and background that apply to specific situations divided into four biomass groups:

1. Perennial grasses (including dedicated grass crops and lands with extant grass cover),
2. Trees and shrubs (including dedicated woody crops and lands with extant tree and shrub cover that are not considered forest),
3. Wetlands
4. Crop residues



The guidelines are based on the best available science, and include recommendations for sustainable production and harvest of non-forest biomass within both natural and agricultural systems on public and private lands that will be used to generate electricity, liquid transportation fuel, and heat. The guidelines will not address woody biomass from forested systems as such guidelines already exist.

Drafts of both the Executive Report and Full Report can be found here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/wildlife/biomass.htm>. Both documents are in draft form. We welcome your comments on all aspects of the documents, but are primarily interested in feedback on content and secondarily on format.

Public Lands Management

Contributed by Alan Crossley

Master Planning

Good progress continues on the master plans for the Sandhill/Meadow Valley/Wood County Work Unit, Columbia County Property Group, Lower Wolf, and the Wildlife, Fishery, and State Natural Areas of the Northern Kettle Moraine Region. Fred Strand and John Pohlman are also gearing up for the Northwest Sands Pine Barrens Ecosystem Restoration and Management Plan. We are very fortunate to have Ed Jepsen and Beth Kienbaum join with Diane Brusoe and Yoyi Steele to work on these master plans for us.

One of the huge benefits of master planning is that it creates an opportunity for folks responsible for managing these properties to take a deep breath, sit back, and think carefully and strategically about the management direction for these properties. What should the management goals be over the next 15-20 years? What features, species, and/or recreational opportunities make these properties special? How does the management of these properties fit into the long-term strategic direction for wildlife in the state? Master plans also lay out goals, objectives and prescriptions for the properties that provide consistency in management even as property managers change or retire. And the master planning process creates a clear opportunity to involve the public in the future direction and management of state properties. Check out this website to learn more about master planning: http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/

Better Promoting our State Wildlife Areas

How did you do on the state wildlife area quiz that appeared on page 24 of the December report? I'll bet you were surprised by some or all of the answers. We hope to change that in the years ahead. Our State Fair exhibit, developed by Mary Kay Salwey, is a great tool for raising awareness of how far and wide state wildlife areas are scattered across the state and the many recreational activities that are available on our properties. That display is making its way around to sports shows across the state and will return to the State Fair in 2011. There is much more we can and should do.

The motivation for this is simple. The more people know how management of our state wildlife areas contributes to the quality of life that our citizens enjoy in Wisconsin, the more support we have for continuing to do the work that we love to do. Check out our website to learn more about the state wildlife area closest to you: http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/wildlife_areas/.



FURBEARER PROGRAM

Contributed by John Olson and Shawn Rossler

Bobcat Season Update

On January 31, the 2010-11 bobcat seasons closed, marking the end of the first split season framework in Wisconsin history. Reports to the new call-in system have been summarized. During Time Period 1 (Oct. 16-Dec. 25, 2010) a total of 134 bobcats were reported, with a quota of 173. During Time Period 2 (Dec. 26, 2010-Jan. 31, 2011) a total of 131 bobcats were reported, with a quota of 173. The total reported bobcat harvest for both seasons was 265; however, these totals may change slightly. The reported harvest was below quota during both time periods.

The new split season framework is subject to a two year sunset, which means we will continue this format into the next harvest season, 2011-12. The furbearer program will work with the bureau of Integrated Science Services, Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA), and the Furbearer Technical Advisory Committee to collect information as well as survey hunter and trappers regarding their opinions of the new season framework. A thorough review of the framework, reporting system, harvest, and resource users will determine whether the split season framework will continue in future seasons.

Trapper Education Updates

The Furbearer Program has worked with Customer Service and Licensing and Law Enforcement staff to develop a "Basics of Trapping" reference document. The document covers license and education requirements, general trap identification, recommended traps for species, rules and regulations, possession restrictions, and various uses of furbearers. The goal is to provide additional trapping related resources to department staff in order to better serve the public. In the upcoming weeks, staff will add voice-over material

to the document. Look for it to become available later this spring.

The production of a Trapper Ethics DVD is being planned for this spring/summer. The initial script has been developed and submitted for approval. The end product will be an 8-10 minute video for use during trapper education programs in Wisconsin and possibly the Midwest region.

Track Training Workshop (December 9-10)

Twenty plus professionals attended the biennial workshop at UW-Stevens Point Treehaven Field

Station near Tomahawk, Wisconsin, put on by the Furbearer Program and led by Dr. James Halfpenny of Gardner, Montana. The two day workshop covered track identification, snow tracking, survey protocol and other tracking related information.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Humane

Trap Research Meeting (Jan. 19-20)

Madison was the host city for the technical working group annual meeting, a shock to most in attendance, as it was much colder than South Carolina or Louisiana where the meeting is typically held. Discussions covered topics such as Best Management Practice (BMP) outreach, the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), and the development of a National Conservation Need (NCN) proposal. Other highlights included a tour of North American Fur Auctions (NAFA) in Stoughton while in full production mode and a tour of the famous Fur Resource Training Center (FRTC), affectionately known by many of us as the "Fur Shed".

Carcass Laboratory and Data Collection

A huge trailer load of furbearer carcasses was collected during the statewide meeting in



Dean Miller

Sheboygan, thanks to field wildlife personnel. The first furbearer carcass laboratory event of the season was a success as 30 die-hard volunteers worked to remove teeth and reproductive tracks of 110 bobcat and 640 fisher carcasses in roughly 4 ½ hours. The next furbearer carcass laboratory event will be held at the DNR facility in Black River Falls on March 9th. Contact Mike Worland, Dave MacFarland, John Olson, or Shawn Rossler if you have interest in attending.

Northland College Fur School

This fur school for college students will be held February 11-13 in Ashland. The class filled almost immediately. We're looking forward to another great group of future resource professionals at this accredited class.

UW Madison Fur School

This fur school will be held March 4-6th at the Fur Resources Training Center (FRTC) just north of Madison. This class is held every two years and is part of a larger, accredited wildlife program coordinated by Jamie Nack of the UW Forestry and Wildlife Ecology Department.

WTA Annual Spring Meetings

On March 18-20, the Wisconsin Trappers Association will convene their annual meetings and banquet at the Stoney Creek Inn near Mosinee. Three separate meetings involve several aspects of furbearer management and regulated trapping, including trapper education, harvest seasons, rule

proposals, and various other updates. If interested, just Google the WTA and consider attending fun and interesting events in mid-winter!

Beaver Management Plan

Contributed by John Olson

The existing beaver management plan is now 20 years old. It was developed at a time when beaver impacts needed to be reduced across many areas of Wisconsin. Implementation of that plan has substantially reduced beaver numbers. Some stakeholders are very concerned about beaver population trends, while other stakeholders are still concerned about beaver numbers in some areas. Some wildlife is benefitted by beaver activity, while some fish are adversely impacted. In consideration of all the positive and negative values associated with beavers, a new plan is needed to guide management into the future. To this end, a Beaver Management Task Force will be organized this spring, followed by regional listening sessions conducted over the next several months. Input collected will be molded into draft management proposals, which will be available for review by all user groups and individuals with interest. Following these subsequent waves of input, final management plans will be developed and recommended for adoption. This will take time but should result in reasonable and balanced guidance for management of this important resource that affects so many people and so many wildlife and fish.

Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims

Contributed by Brad Koele

Preliminary totals show 985 individuals enrolled in the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program seeking damage abatement assistance for agriculture damages caused by deer, bear, geese, and turkeys. Six hundred and fifty-five enrolled for deer damage abatement assistance, 268 for bear damage abatement assistance, 123 for goose damage abatement assistance, and 104 for turkey damage abatement assistance (note: enrollees can enroll for multiple species). This is a decrease from 1,058 enrollees in 2009.

Preliminary figures also indicate the Department issued 505 agriculture damage deer shooting permits in 2010, on which 2,819 deer were harvested. Deer harvest figures are likely to increase as deer registration stations continue to submit registration stubs to the Department. This is a significant decrease from 2009 levels, when the Department issued 606 agricultural damage deer shooting permits and 3,743 deer were harvested. The counties with the greatest number of permits issued in 2010 were Marinette County (45 permits issued), Outagamie County (26 permits issued), and Vernon County (26 permits issued). A final report on the results of deer shooting permits issued in 2010 will be available in June 2011.

BEAR PROGRAM

Contributed by Linda Olver

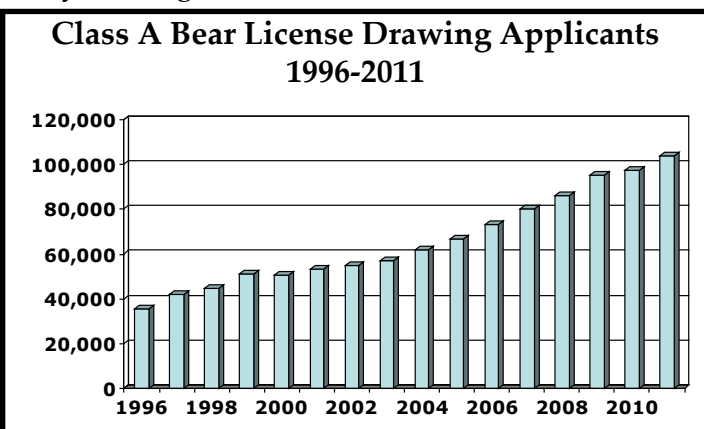
2011 Bear Season Quota and Harvest Permit Levels

The Natural Resources Board (NRB) voted to approve the proposed 2011 bear season quota and harvest permit levels at their January 26, 2011 meeting. The 2011 quota will remain the same as the 2010 quota of 5,235 bears. Harvest permits will increase slightly over those offered in 2009 due to changes in hunter success rates in 2010. Nine-thousand five harvest permits will be distributed in the bear license drawing. The breakdown of permits by management zone is as follows: Zone A - 3,465 permits Zone B - 1,510 permits; Zone C - 2,550 permits, and Zone D - 1,480 permits.

Bear Zone	Quota	Permits
A	2,200	3,465
B	1,075	1,510
C	860	2,550
D	1,100	1,480
Total	5,235	9,005

Bear Permit Drawing

Competition to draw a bear tag remains high, as more than 76,000 people applied for a preference point and 27,796 asked to be included in the bear drawing, for a total 103,860 applicants. Drawing winners will be notified by mail by February 15, 2011. Applicants may also check their drawing or preference point status through the DNR's On-line Licensing Center, the DNR's call center at 1-888-936-7463 (toll free seven days a week from 7am-10pm) or by visiting a DNR Service Center.

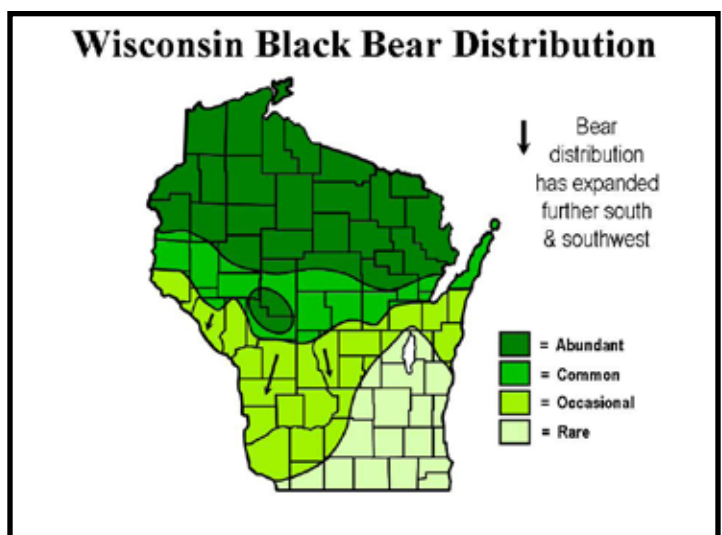


2011 Spring Hearing Bear Tissue Sample Advisory Question

The Department annually requests successful bear hunters submit a pre-molar bear tooth at the time of registration. We have also requested bear hunters submit a small, 2-inch piece of bear rib as part of bear population research projects. Bear teeth provide important data needed to monitor the age structure of the bear harvest. Bear rib samples are an integral component of mark-recapture population studies. Bear sample submission, both tooth and rib, is currently voluntary. The 2011 Spring Hearings will include an advisory question asking whether Spring Hearing participants would favor a requirement that, when requested by the Department, hunters must provide bear carcass samples for research purposes at the time of harvest registration. Requiring mandatory bear sample submission would return the most value on research dollars invested and help provide the most accurate data used for bear management purposes.

2010 Bear Sighting Reports

The Department continues to monitor bear distribution in areas designated as "occasional" or "rare" on the bear distribution map posted on the department web site. In 2010, we received more



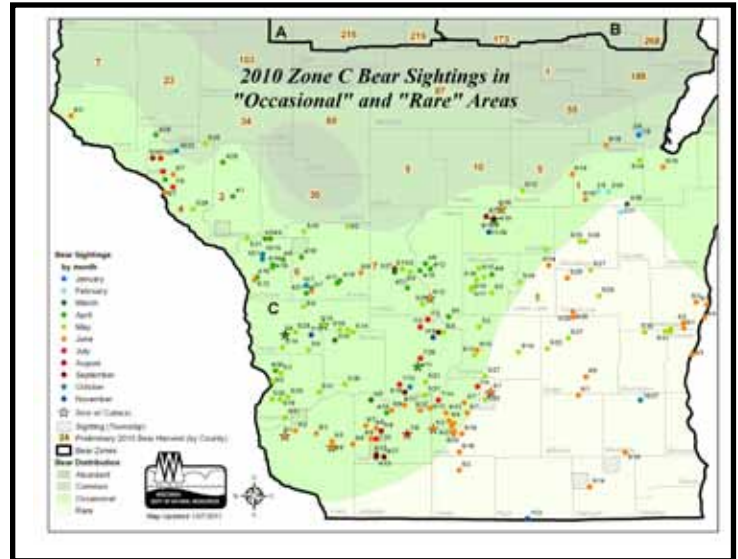
than 200 bear sighting reports. A new on-line bear reporting tool has been added to our web site, which provides a convenient way for the public to report bear sightings. We encourage people

to use the easy on-line tool to report their bear observations in areas where bears are occasional or rare, which includes approximately the southern half of Wisconsin. Thank you to all who took the time to report their bear sightings.

2011 Bear Regulations Now Available

The 2011 bear regulations are now available in print at DNR service centers and on the DNR's new website at <http://new.dnr.wi.gov/DocumentLibrary/Repository/Lands/Wildlife%20Management/Regulations/regsbear.pdf>.

Contributed by Meaghan Proctor



Wildlife Health

Contributed by Tami Ryan

Lead in the Environment

The Natural Resources Board held a seminar on “Lead as a Wildlife Conservation Issue” in late January. The focus of the seminar was as follows:

“The use of lead by hunters and anglers has recently been brought back into the spotlight. Despite the large body of scientific information regarding the deleterious impacts of lead, a great deal of misinformation still exists. The purpose of this session is to provide factual information regarding lead and its potential impacts to the WI Natural Resources Board (NRB), the Department of Natural Resources leadership, and the public.”

Presentations were made by Robert Thiboldeaux, PhD, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services on Clinical Effects of Lead on Humans; Julie Langenberg, VMD, International Crane Foundation on Clinical Effects of Lead on Animals including Wildlife; Milt Friend, PhD, Emeritus Scientist, USGS National Wildlife Health Center on the History of the Issue and Future Implications; and Dave Clausen, DVM, Wisconsin NRB on the Lead Issue as seen by a Veterinarian and Hunter.

The seminar is available for public viewing on the Department of Natural Resources website under the link: <http://dnrmedia.wi.gov/main/Viewer/?peid=25573790b0024797a9bf8234b972f6cc>.

Great Lakes Emergency Oil Spill Response Planning

Health Section staff have recently become involved with contingency planning for rapid response to an oil spill for the Sector Lake Michigan Area Contingency Plan (ACP). Contingency plans describe information and processes for containing and cleaning up an oil spill that occurs in a defined geographic area. ACPs assist response personnel in their efforts to contain and clean-up oil spills by outlining the steps that should be taken before, during, and after an incident. A well-designed contingency plan enables oil spill response efforts to proceed smoothly and effectively, minimizes danger to clean-up personnel, reduces the overall costs of clean-up by avoiding unnecessary efforts, and ensures that sensitive habitats are protected.



MIGRATORY BIRD PROGRAM

Contributed by Kent Van Horn and
James Christopoulos

Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey

This US Fish and Wildlife Service coordinated survey was conducted by numerous state and federal biologists during the week of January 3-7, 2011 and provides a snapshot of winter waterfowl numbers and distribution around Wisconsin and throughout the flyway. It also gives us important abundance indices for some species that are not readily monitored during spring breeding surveys. For those who are interested in the previous 2 year's results for this survey, they are available at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/waterfowl/reportindex.htm>. Preliminary numbers from Wisconsin indicate around 38,000 Canada geese, 34,000 dabbling ducks, 44,000 diving/sea ducks, 11,000 mergansers, 571 trumpeter swans, and 1,114 bald eagles. State counts can fluctuate widely based on ice and snow conditions each year, so generalizations should not be made about overall populations since birds may simply be wintering elsewhere. This year, numbers were up for all species and groups noted except for trumpeter swans.

Doves

On February 8-10, Kent Van Horn will meet with other state and federal representatives from around the eastern US that are part of the Eastern Dove Management Unit. Topics of discussion will include: a review of the 2010 dove banding efforts and coordination for 2011, proposed research to improve the spring call count (the survey used to measure trends in the dove population), presentations on a lead shot availability study in North Carolina, coordination of a national dove hunter survey on non-toxic shot, and state recommendations to the US Fish and Wildlife

Service (USFWS) for the 2011 hunting season.

Winter Flyway Meeting

Kent Van Horn and Ron Gatti will attend the Mississippi Flyway Council Technical Section meeting February 21-25. Because ducks, geese, and other migratory game birds move between state and national boundaries, the Flyway Council

was created to provide a means through which states and provinces can work together to collaboratively manage the shared resource. In conjunction with attendance at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting, Tom Hauge will meet with other Council members in March to make decisions based on recommendations that come out of the Technical Section. Topics on the agenda include analysis of harvest and survival rates for Canada geese and wood ducks and future banding plans, a review of marshbird population monitoring, state recommendations on early season (September) migratory game bird seasons, review and discussion of early teal season harvest analyses, safety

issues in aerial bird surveys, and cooperative budget and monitoring projects.

2011 Duck Zone Changes

Late last summer, the USFWS proposed allowing states some additional options for duck hunting zones during the once every 5 year change period in 2011. During the fall of 2010, staff and an ad hoc committee of duck hunters reviewed data and developed some options for a new duck zone configuration. The primary desire for this effort was to create a zone in the state where the latest duck hunting opportunities would be possible. The options developed by these committees were sent out in a mail survey in November. The results of this survey were analyzed in January. Kent Van Horn will be presenting the results of these surveys at statewide meetings of Ducks Unlimited and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association as well as the March Wisconsin Waterfowl Hunters Conference. Additional opportunities for public input will come through the spring hearings in April 2011.



Dr. Thomas G. Barnes

Youth Hunting and Conservation Education

Special Youth Hunting and Trapping Opportunities and Education for 2011

Contributed by Meaghan Proctor

Youth have access to several events to help expand their hunting horizons. Below are some of the opportunities that are available to youth in the upcoming year. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather, a sampling of the many opportunities that are available.

Youth Hunt Weekends -- For wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and waterfowl, one weekend each year prior to the normal hunting season has been set aside for persons 10-15 years of age (residents and non-residents) to gain hunting experience. All youth hunters need to have successfully completed a hunter education course unless participating in the Hunting Mentorship Program, hold all required permits and tags, and be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian 18 years of age or older. The adult may not accompany more than two youth hunters.

The spring turkey youth hunt will be on April 9 and 10. A spring turkey license, stamp, and valid carcass tag are required. Youths can hunt regardless of which time period their permit is issued, but may only hunt in the Turkey Management Zone designated on their permit. Bag limit is one male or bearded turkey in total during this two-day youth hunt. All other hunting regulations apply.

The youth deer hunt will be on October 8 and 9. Youth hunters may hunt deer with a gun in all Deer Management Units (DMU) except state park and non-quota units. A gun deer hunting license is required. The bag limit is one buck per Gun Buck Deer Carcass Tag plus an additional antlerless deer per Antlerless Deer Carcass Tag valid for the DMU in which the youth is hunting. Youth hunters are exempt from Earn-A-Buck requirements during the October 8 and 9 hunt. All other hunting regulations apply.

The tentative dates for the youth waterfowl hunt are September 17 and 18 (dates will be finalized in Mid-August). All license and stamp requirements are waived for eligible youth duck hunters on these 2 days. We expect the duck bag limit to be the same as during the regular season. Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration is required of all youth hunters, and to harvest a Canada goose the youth must possess a Canada goose harvest permit for the zone he or she is hunting in. All other hunting regulations apply.

Hunter Education -- Hunter Education and Bow Hunter Education are offered statewide throughout the year with most classes held in February-April and July-September. For more details, visit the DNR website at dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/hunted.htm for Hunter Education or dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/bowed.htm for Bow Hunter Education.

Hunting Mentorship Program -- The Hunting Mentorship Program was implemented to allow any person the opportunity to hunt with a mentor without needing to first complete Hunter Education. A mentored hunter must be at least 10 years old, possess the appropriate hunting license, permits, and



Jeff Pritzl

Peter Pritzl harvested his first turkey during a mentored hunt with his Dad

tags, and must hunt within arms reach of a mentor who is 18 years of age or older. The mentor must have a current valid hunting approval, and have completed a hunter education course if born on or after January 1, 1973. Visit the following website for complete information and rules: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/mentor.htm.

Learn to Hunt Program -- The Learn to Hunt Program is an educational opportunity designed to help novice hunters, both youth and adults, have a high-quality, safe, and rewarding hunting experience under the guidance of experienced hunters. Learn to Hunt events are offered for bear, turkey, deer, pheasant, upland game, and waterfowl. Many of these Learn to Hunt events are sponsored by local conservation clubs and organizations under the supervision of the Department. For more details and a listing of upcoming programs in your area, see the DNR website at: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/learnhunt.htm.

Learn to Deer Hunt – Buckhorn State Park -- This hunt is for novice hunters ages 10 and up who have never purchased a license for the target species. Applications must be sent by July 15. Successful applicants and their chaperones are required to attend a one-day workshop in order to participate in the hunt; applicants will be assigned to either the August 21 or the 22 workshop. The deer hunt is on November 5 and 6. For an application and complete set of rules visit the Buckhorn website at: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/specific/buckhorn/hunt.htm.

Learn to Deer Hunt – Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center -- Youth (ages 12-15) and Beginner Adult (ages 16 and over) Learn to Deer Hunt Workshops are one day and run from 8 am to 5 pm. The Beginner Adult workshop is on September 24. Several youth workshops will be held during the month of August. Applications must be post-marked by May 31. All participants must be enrolled in or have completed a Hunter Education course. The hunt is tentatively set for November 5 and 6. A student who has participated in the Buckhorn youth deer hunt program is not allowed to participate in the Sandhill hunt and vice versa. For a complete set of rules and applications for all programs at the Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center, visit: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/reclands/sandhill/outdoorskillscenter.htm.

Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center Trapper Education Workshop – This workshop will be held on September 17-18 for those ages 12 years and up. The course provides hands-on learning about humane and efficient manners of trapping. The \$25.00 fee includes 3 meals, dorm stay, and a manual. Bring your own lunch on Saturday. Register by September 7. See the Sandhill website above.

Wisconsin Outdoor Education Expo -- This youth expo is a completely free opportunity for kids of all ages to enjoy hands-on activities that will teach them about archery, fishing, dog training, firearm safety, wildlife, and conservation heritage. This year's expo will be held at the Dodge County Fairgrounds in Beaver Dam on May 19 and 20, 2011. Please visit www.wisexpo.com for more information.

4-H Shooting Sports Program -- 4-H Shooting Sports programs are available to youth from third grade through the year following high school. Shooting Sports disciplines include archery, air pistol, hunting/wildlife ecology, muzzleloading, rifle, shotgun, and reloading. The objectives of the program are to 1) create an appreciation and understanding of natural resources; 2) teach youth firearm and archery safety; 3) develop self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility and sportsmanship; and 4) provide training for volunteer instructors and show volunteer leaders how to plan and manage shooting sports clubs. Youth may join the 4-H Shooting Sports program by contacting the 4-H Youth Development Educator in their County Extension Office. A list of competitive shoots, adult certification workshops, and additional information on the Wisconsin 4-H Shooting Sports program may be found at: www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/onlinpro/shooting/index.cfm.

National Archery in the Schools Program -- Wisconsin is also part of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) and will be holding a state tournament on April 1 and 2 in Wisconsin Rapids. To participate, a student must have participated in NASP during school hours during the current year. Currently, over 270 Wisconsin schools participate in NASP, and interest by other schools continues to grow! For more information contact Dan Schroeder, the state coordinator, at: daniel.schroeder@wisconsin.gov.

Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative



Contributed by Andy Paulios

Owl Surveys

Great Horned Owls are beginning their nesting season, and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) will be seeking volunteers this February to run owl surveys in April.

Results from previous years, including 2010, are available at <http://wiatri.net/projects/birdroutes/owls.htm>. 2010 was a particularly good year for Northern Saw-whet Owls in Wisconsin and Minnesota with numbers in Wisconsin the highest they've been in the six years of this survey.

Grassland Bird Plan

Grassland Bird Plan -- The WBCI Grassland Bird Conservation Implementation Plan is in the final stages of development. Mapping has been completed on many of the potential Grassland Bird Conservation Areas and final goal-setting meetings will take place in February for the Western Prairie, Southwest Grasslands and Central Wisconsin Grasslands Conservation Areas. A draft is expected by March 10th. This plan will help WBCI partners to strategically implement grassland bird conservation objectives from the Upper Miss/Great



Northern Saw-whet Owl

Lakes Joint Venture and will monitor bird response to these efforts so that we can adaptively manage populations into the future.

Bird City

Communities planning to apply for Bird City status should be working now to put together their application for the March 1st deadline. Application materials and information are available at <http://www.birdcitywisconsin.org/>.

Carl Schwartz, Bird City Coordinator, is available for consultation and guidance at the contact information on the webpage.



FEATURED REGION: SOUTH CENTRAL

Contributed by Bill Ishmael and other South Central Region Staff

Property Highlights:

The South Central Region (SCR) consists of 11 counties: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock, and Sauk, reaching from the Wisconsin Dells and Horicon Marsh south to the Illinois border and east from the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin to the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Portions of three major river systems (Mississippi River, Wisconsin River, Rock River) flow through or along the boundaries of the region. The SCR contains 8,690 square miles of land area, 170 square miles of open water and a human population of 986,500 for an average population density of 110 people/square mile of land area (based on 2000 U.S. Census Records) and 18.5% of Wisconsin's population.

There are 32 permanent wildlife positions allocated to the region including one Regional Supervisor, four Area Supervisors, 12 Wildlife Biologists, 14 Wildlife Technicians, and 1 Natural Resources Educator. The SCR is "home" to the State Game Farm at Poynette and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Operations at Dodgeville. In addition to permanent staff, a varying number of Limited Term Employees (LTEs) assist with wildlife program responsibilities and are critical to accomplishing program-wide objectives in the region. For regional wildlife program administration, the SCR is divided into four administrative Areas with an Area Supervisor overseeing the wildlife program and staff in each Area. Each Area includes a team of Wildlife Biologists, Technicians and LTEs that are assigned to a county or group of counties for their individual program responsibilities.

Wildlife program staff in the SCR are responsible for all habitat management and public facilities maintenance and development activities on 33 named Wildlife Management Areas totaling more than 80,000 acres, in addition to habitat management responsibilities on 45,350 acres in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, 4,900 acres of Extensive Wildlife Habitat Program lands, 1,700 acres of Scattered Wildlife Habitat Program lands and 7,800 acres of Fisheries Areas.

Portions or all of two landscape-scale habitat restoration project areas lie within the SCR. The Glacial Habitat Restoration Area (GHRA) in portions of Columbia, Dodge, Fond Du Lac and Winnebago counties has a goal of restoring and conserving 38,600 acres of permanent grassland nesting cover and 11,000 acres of wetlands in the 24-township area totaling 533,800 acres. The Southwest Wisconsin Grassland and Stream Conservation Area (SWGSCA) project was approved by the Natural Resources Board in June, 2009, and planning and acquisition efforts are underway toward a goal of acquiring and conserving 12,000 acres of grasslands and stream corridors within the 473,900-acre project boundary including portions of Dane, Green, Iowa, and Lafayette counties.

Region-wide activities and accomplishments include:

Land Acquisition -- State acquisition of lands preserves critical habitats, enhances wildlife habitat management opportunities, provides increased opportunity for public recreation and improves access to existing state lands. Several new acquisitions were completed in 2010, adding to existing Wildlife Areas and the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway in the region. They include:

- 40 acres in 3 parcels at Dell Creek Wildlife Area
- 106 acres at Swan Lake Wildlife Area
- 240 acres in the Glacial Habitat Restoration Area
- 256 acres at Pine Island Wildlife Area
- 24 acres at Mud Lake Wildlife Area
- 5 acres at Peter Helland Wildlife Area
- 438 acres in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway

Migratory Bird Banding – During late summer and early fall, 2010, SCR Wildlife Program staff captured and banded 791 Canada geese, 1,310 ducks, 299 mourning doves, and 5 trumpeter swans to contribute to the USFWS annual banding quotas for migratory birds to improve our understanding of migration routes, harvest rates, and survival rates of migratory birds in the Mississippi Flyway.

Deer and Turkey Registration – SCR Wildlife Program staff set up and monitored 125 Cooperative Deer and Fall Turkey Registration Stations to provide registration services and collect harvest data during the fall 2010 hunting seasons. During the past 5 years, hunters in the SCR counties have harvested an annual average of 68,000 deer. Following the close of deer hunting seasons, SCR wildlife staff work with DNR Wildlife Research staff to analyze harvest and population data in preparation for annual public Herd Status Meetings. These meetings will be held at several locations in SCR in early March to inform the public about the status of deer populations in their area.

Deer Aging Surveys – As part of the annual statewide effort to collect age samples for deer population models, 11 SCR Wildlife Program staff collected a total of 1,034 age samples at 7 different stations in Grant and Dodge counties on opening weekend of the gun deer season. This is in addition to the nearly 7,000 age samples collected through CWD surveillance efforts last fall.

Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey – On January 5, SCR Wildlife Program staff from Boscobel and Spring Green conducted the annual aerial survey of wintering bald eagles along 180 miles of the Wisconsin River from the Petenwell Dam downstream to the confluence with the Mississippi River. They counted a total of 473 eagles, the third highest number counted since the annual surveys began in 1992.

Midwinter Waterfowl Survey – 15 SCR Wildlife Program staff conducted ground or aerial surveys of waterfowl during the week of January 3 as part of an annual national survey effort to assess waterfowl populations.

Fish Survey Cooperation -- Retired and current DNR water resources biologists Dave Marshall and Jim Amrhein rediscovered the state endangered starhead topminnow late this summer in the Lower Sugar River, within Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area; it had been absent for more than 25 years. Wildlife management staff then assisted Dave and Jim in finding starheads at 5 additional sites on the property, some of which had apparently healthy populations numbering hundreds of individuals.

Wildlife Damage / Nuisance Complaints -- Human-wildlife conflicts in SCR counties are

common due to the mix of agricultural and urban landscapes in the region, and staff spends a considerable amount of time responding to nuisance wildlife complaints as well as agricultural damage caused by wildlife. SCR staff provided technical assistance to hundreds of property owners and businesses experiencing problems with nuisance wildlife. During 2010, SCR wildlife staff issued 92 deer damage shooting permits, 6 goose shooting permits and 30 goose damage Managed Access Permits to agricultural landowners under the Wildlife Damage Claims and Abatement Program. Preliminary totals indicate that approximately 600 deer were harvested in SCR during the 2010 growing season as a crop damage abatement tool under Deer Damage Shooting Permits.

Populations of deer, turkeys, Canada geese, and coyotes in urban areas of SCR continue to pose management challenges for SCR wildlife staff and municipal governments and institutions. SCR wildlife staff met with several municipalities to provide technical guidance on how to reduce conflicts with these species. In addition, 7 nuisance deer shooting permits were issued to municipal governments, institutions or municipal airports in the region in 2010.

Habitat Restoration and Maintenance: Prescribed Burning -- Prescribed burning is a critical habitat management tool for restoration and maintenance of fire-dependent vegetation communities, and is widely used by SCR wildlife staff during the spring



Conducting a prescribed burn at Avoca Prairie State Natural Area in Iowa County

months and increasingly during the fall to restore or maintain grasslands, savanna and wetlands. An average of approximately 6,000 acres of these habitats are burned in SCR each year. Despite setbacks due to weather conditions in spring 2010, SCR wildlife staff had a very successful prescribed burn season. Last fall, an additional 500 acres of grassland and savanna were successfully burned. SCR wildlife staff are busy at work right now preparing Prescribed Burn Proposals, establishing firebreaks and getting prescribed burn equipment such as tankers, ATVs, drip torches, back pack sprayers, and personal protective gear ready for the upcoming burn season which usually gets underway in late March and extends into early May.

Habitat Restoration and Maintenance: Sharecropping -- Sharecropping state-owned lands in SCR is another important tool for achieving habitat management objectives, benefits to farmland wildlife, and benefits for local agricultural communities in the region. For instance, Sharecrop Agreements with neighboring farmers are used to prepare seedbeds for future restoration of native grasslands or to control or convert infestations of weeds or brush. Rotational grazing, under Grazing Agreements with local livestock producers is also proving to be an effective tool for controlling brush and invasive plant species. Winter months are time for wildlife staff to review compliance with the terms and objectives of 2010 growing season Sharecrop Agreements and to renew agreements and cropping plans in advance of the 2011 growing season. SCR wildlife staff administer approximately 85 Sharecrop or Grazing Agreements each year totaling more than 3,500 acres of state-owned lands in the region.

Habitat Restoration and Maintenance: Invasive Plant and Invasive Vertebrate Species Control -- Efforts to control invasive plant and vertebrate species demands more SCR wildlife staff time each year as new invasive species appear and populations of existing invasive species continue to expand. Garlic mustard, Japanese hedge parsley, poison hemlock, phragmites, and wild parsnip are just a few on the list that are threatening native plant communities in SCR. Mute swans occur in low numbers in scattered locations in SCR, but their populations can grow rapidly and have negative impacts on wetlands and native wetland wildlife

species, and SCR wildlife staff have been working to control populations of this species in the region.

Levee/flood Response for the September, 2010 Flood -- Record rainfalls in northern and central Wisconsin in late September resulted in record water levels and flooding in the Wisconsin River basin during late September and early October. The Wisconsin River at Portage crested at 20.66 ft. (3.66 ft. above flood stage) on September 28, which threatened the 14-mile Caledonia/Lewiston Levee System. SCR wildlife staff, as members of the Levee Incident Management Team, were activated and worked rotating shifts, under an Incident Command System, to monitor the levee and place sandbags from September 26 through

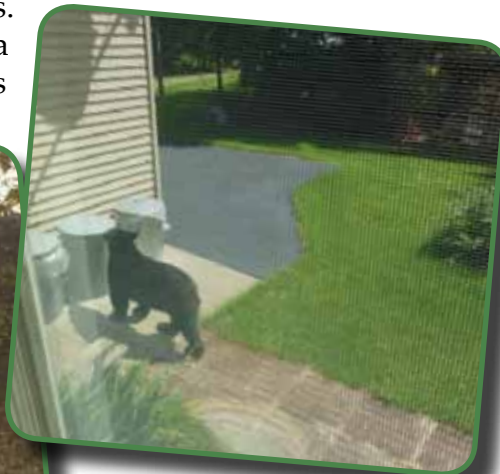


Wildlife staff from Spring Green and Boscobel place sand bags on the saturated Caledonia/Lewiston Levee during the late September, 2010 floods

October 1. As floodwaters continued downriver, damage to Wildlife Areas, especially flowage dikes, occurred; but, fortunately, no significant breaches or washouts occurred, and most repairs were made to the flowage dikes, boat landings and public access roads by late October.

Wildlife Species Range Expansions -- During the last decade, SCR Wildlife program staff have received an increasing number of reports of black bears, bobcats and fisher in SCR counties. These species are expanding their range into areas of Wisconsin where they have not occurred for more than 100 years. For the first time this year, Wildlife and Law Enforcement staff were able to document

the presence of bear cubs and bobcat kittens in the region, clear evidence of a resident breeding population of both species. Genetics research at Iowa State University indicates that at least



some of our new resident bobcats are moving into southwestern Wisconsin from the state of Iowa. A fisher was harvested by a trapper in Iowa County in December and reports of fisher sightings are becoming more common.

Wildlife staff conducted the first ever bear bait transect survey in the SCR by setting up 50 bait stations along a transect route including portions of Sauk, Columbia and Richland counties in June. Two bait stations in northern Sauk County were visited by bears during the week-long survey. Ron Seeley wrote a front-page feature article on the bear bait transect survey: http://host.madison.com/ws/j/news/local/environment/article_a5e5270a-80aa-11df-a76c-001cc4c03286.html.

SCR wildlife staff, along with DNR Law Enforcement staff and USDA-Wildlife Services, investigated 5 reports of "cougar" attacks on domestic livestock during fall and early winter in Grant, Lafayette, Iowa and Dane Counties. Several reported "cougar" sightings were also investigated. It was determined that none of the livestock attacks or injuries were caused by cougars, but instead had been the result of domestic dogs, coyotes or injuries sustained from fences or machinery. Similarly, reported sightings of cougars in SCR counties during 2010 could not be confirmed with tracks, photos or scat. However, a cougar was confirmed in Rock County in 2008 and was later killed by police officers in metro Chicago. Although cougars have been documented in a few locations elsewhere in Wisconsin over the past 3 years, they are still

considered extremely rare in Wisconsin.

State Game Farm at Poynette and Columbia County Work Unit -- In 2010, the pheasant stocking program began the 82nd year of releasing pheasants on Wisconsin public hunting grounds. This program continues to be popular with Wisconsin sportsmen and women by providing pheasant hunting opportunities on public hunting grounds across the State.

During the fall of 2010, the State Game Farm provided 50,000 pheasants for release on 72 public hunting grounds and provided 37,000 rooster chicks to 34 conservation clubs enrolled in the Cooperative Day-old Chick Program.

The State Game Farm provided nearly 800 rooster pheasants to Learn to Hunt pheasant programs scattered across the state, from Ashland County to southern Wisconsin.

In cooperation with the Department of Corrections, the State Game Farm refurbished pheasant



The state game farm in Poynette

rearing facilities at the Oregon and Oneida Correctional Centers during 2010. New, fully-equipped brooder houses were constructed using Department of Corrections prison inmate and DNR labor. The new brooder houses replace houses that were used at the



State Game Farm in the 1960s and moved to the correctional centers in the mid 1980s.

Pheasant stocking – During October through early December, 2010 SCR Wildlife Program staff stocked 21,020 pheasants on 34 public hunting grounds in SCR on 11 stocking dates.



CWD Operations -- Winter fixed-wing and helicopter counts are being used to develop overwinter deer population estimates in the CWD Zone Deer Management Units. Fourteen SCR Wildlife program staff are involved in conducting 3,002 miles of fixed-wing linear transects and helicopter counts over 250 square mile sections each winter. These efforts got off to an early start in December 2010 with the arrival of several inches of snow and will be completed during the months of January and February, 2011.

CWD Wildlife Biologist, Nancy Frost has accepted a lateral transfer to the Dane County Wildlife Biologist, stationed at Fitchburg, and moved into this position in December.

CWD Fall/Winter Sample Collections and Test Results -- During fall, 2010 CWD staff worked to set up 26 locations across 7 counties where hunters can get their deer sampled for CWD. Many of these are locations where hunters can also register their deer and donate their deer (if they choose) to the food pantry. An additional 14 sampling locations were located in the Southeast Region's portion of the CWD Management Zone, which includes Dodge and Jefferson Counties. Increased sampling efforts have continued in the areas around two CWD Monitoring Areas (Western Core Area and the Baraboo Range) as well as

southeast Richland County and southwest Sauk County, with an overall goal of about 9000 samples from the entire CWD-Management Zone in 2010. Over 65 Wildlife program staff and approximately 30 student volunteers sampled deer for CWD in 18 new locations within the SCR on the opening weekend of the 2010 9-day deer gun season. These stations, combined with the 26 regular sampling sites, afforded hunters 44 locations in the SCR to get their deer registered and sampled on the weekend. A total of 6,867 CWD samples were collected in SCR during the fall 2010 hunting seasons. Of 6,614 samples analyzed, 201 tested positive.

CWD Public Outreach -- CWD Operations staff conducted 5 CWD Management Zone "Herd Status Meetings" in 2010, and increased our public outreach which included over 10 news articles/press releases/video media, 20+ High School presentations, 4 public meetings (civic organizations, town boards, etc.), and contacted all town board chairs via e-mail or letter regarding the 2010 season framework and new regulations. Preparations are underway to summarize deer population estimates and results of the 2010 CWD tests to present this information to the public at several locations in SCR during March 2011 as well as on the department website.

Venison Donation -- CWD Operations staff played an active role in helping organize and implement a venison donation program in the CWD Management Zone. During the 2010 deer seasons 1,109 deer were donated by hunters and processed for food pantries in southern Wisconsin.

Waste Disposal – The department continued to contract deer carcass and butchering waste disposal to the Dane County Landfill and Janesville landfill, reducing program costs. About 125 tons of carcass waste has gone to the Dane County Landfill from our dumpsters. An additional 18 tons of waste have gone to the Janesville landfill in 2010.

Columbia County

Staff were busy with the fall 2010 deer seasons, fielding calls from the public, setting-up Cooperative Deer Registration stations, and working at CWD sampling stations.

Following a very productive prescribed burn season during spring 2010, staff were able to successfully conduct an additional 3 prescribed

burns last fall totaling 350 acres.

Two wetland restoration projects at Pine Island Wildlife Area were completed along with an impressive brush removal project at Paradise Marsh Wildlife Area that included creating a new parking lot.

Staff finalized a Cooperative Management Plan for the Class I Field Trial Grounds and Dog Training Area at the Pine Island Wildlife Area and the plan was recently signed by the Pine Island Field Trial Grounds Association, our partners in the operation and maintenance of these field trial grounds.

Phase I of the master planning process for all Columbia County Wildlife Areas and the Lodi Marsh Wildlife Area in Dane County is underway and public meetings will be held in 2011 to obtain input on how these properties will be managed in the future.

Staff have assisted with aerial fixed-wing deer surveys this winter in Columbia and Sauk County deer management units which are nearly complete.

Madison Area

(Dane, Rock and Green Counties) activities included the following:

Timber harvests are ongoing at Deansville Wildlife Area and Goose Lake Wildlife Area to improve oak woodlands and remove invasive plants and unwanted tree species for conversion to prairie savanna ecotypes.

Staff completed restoration of a 25-acre basin on Brooklyn Wildlife Area by installing an in-line water control structure on a 10" diameter clay tile line, which will improve wetland habitat and offer additional waterfowling opportunity.

Staff completed FRPP easement acquisition (160 acres) in the Evansville-Footville Leased Hunting Public Ground, and posted this property with new Stewardship easement signs. This property was then stocked for pheasant hunters adding to hunting opportunities.

SCR wildlife staff assisted the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in enrolling and restoring 3,500 acres in perpetual floodplain protection easements and 2,500 acres in perpetual Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easements this year, at a cost of over \$20 million dollars.

These acquisitions included over 3,500 acres restored adjacent to Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area in southwest Rock and southeast Green counties. These acquisitions more than double the protected floodplain forest and wet meadow habitat in and around Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area to more than 6,000 acres along the Lower Sugar River. Of note, one of these WRP easements was the last property necessary (after 65 years of acquisition effort) to complete the flowage rights to restore the 800-acre Brooklyn Marsh. The Natural Heritage Land Trust then worked with DNR to successfully purchase the residual deed, and will soon donate the property to DNR for inclusion in the wildlife area. SCR wildlife staff also assisted in submitting a Phase V application for renewal of the South-central Wisconsin Prairie Pothole Initiative North American Wetland Conservation Act grant. This grant, which appears on track to approval, will hopefully provide \$80,000 in funding for upcoming restoration work.

Also in cooperation with NRCS, two perpetual farmland protection easements with public access totaling 260 acres were purchased within the Evansville Wildlife Area - Footville Leased Public Hunting Ground project in Rock County this year. The Pheasants Forever donation of an additional 70-acre farm for this project was successfully negotiated by Rock County wildlife technician Brian Buenzow, who also signed up 750 acres of new leases. Altogether, these efforts have provided nearly 1,100 acres of new public recreation land within the Evansville - Footville project this year.

Stewardship Program funding for the new Glacial Heritage Area project is expected to fund a 110-acre addition to Lima Marsh Wildlife Area in Rock County as soon as final administrative approvals of a pending option are completed.

SCR wildlife staff burned over 1,300 acres in Rock and Green Counties this year, using pheasant and turkey stamp funds, as part of our ongoing efforts to maintain open grassland, open woodland, and wetland habitat for wildlife. An additional 75 state acres were planted to grassland habitat using pheasant stamp funds, and 28 acres of mixed hardwoods were planted using turkey stamp funds. Brushing on 150 acres with Fecon forestry mowers was completed using turkey stamp funds. Twelve dove fields were planted and maintained on state

lands in Rock and Green counties this year, where they remain very popular with our hunting public.

Two state waterfowl stamp projects were also completed on Brooklyn Wildlife Area in Green County this year, restoring 30 acres of sedge meadow through installation of a sheet pile ditch plug, and another 30 acres of connected shallow water wetland habitat by installing an in-line control structure in a 10" tile line.

Public and disabled access to popular Storrs Lake on the Storrs Lake Wildlife Area near Milton in Rock County was improved by completion of an \$104,000 major renovation project in October, following many years of survey, design and planning effort. A culvert was also replaced in a dike at Storrs Lake Wildlife Area. A new public parking area was constructed on Evansville Wildlife Area and another on Brooklyn Wildlife Area. SCR wildlife staff also worked with DNR trails staff and Ice Age Trail personnel to construct a boardwalk across a perennially wet section of the trail on Brooklyn Wildlife Area, and to install new culverts and rock across another lengthy problem section. Posting and web maps were updated for a number of state properties in Rock and Green Counties.

Wildlife staff hosted a Natural Resources Foundation bird-watching canoe trip through Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area with Andy Paulios as our expert bird guide. Brian Buenzow and Heidi Hayes also worked with Pheasants Forever and other partners to host a Becoming an Outdoors Women weekend workshop in Rock County.

SCR wildlife folks, with the help of tech guru Wade Oehmichen and Bruce Cecka from Fox Valley Technical College, completed a bathymetric survey of Patrick Marsh near Sun Prairie in late July. The intent was to gather data to begin discussions on the feasibility of water level management on this wetland. This was the first Department of Transportation wetland mitigation bank site in the state, but after reaching full pool in the early 1990s and remaining at that level henceforth, productivity has declined considerably.

Dodgeville Area

Activities in Sauk, Richland, Grant, Iowa, Lafayette Counties included the following:

Spring Green Work Unit (Sauk and northern Iowa Counties) -- Staff worked with DNR Foresters to

remove temporary bridges used to cross creeks on a Dell Creek Wildlife Area timber sale. The 91-acre timber sale resulted in the harvest of 2,163 cords. In addition, 20 acres of trees were planted on the Dell Creek Wildlife Area to improve woodland habitat and sustainable timber harvests in the future.

Staff gave presentations on black bear management to approximately 150 high school students and continued to verify and catalog reports of bear sightings in the SCR through summer and fall.

Rotovated firebreaks were established on 15 prescribed burn units in preparation for the spring 2011 burn season, and Fecon mowers are being used to clear firebreaks on an additional 5 units this winter while the ground is frozen.

Wildlife and Forestry staff designed a 146-acre timber sale at White Mound County Park, including a 9-acre aspen clear-cut to improve habitat for ruffed grouse and other woodland wildlife.

Wildlife, Research and Endangered Resources staff are working on plans aimed at protecting neotenic tiger salamanders that were recently found in reservoirs on the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant.

Fecon forestry mowers were used to clear approximately 40 acres of invading brush along grassland borders and former grasslands in the Mazomanie Unit of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (LWSR).

Wildlife and Forestry staff joined forces to mark 60 acres of trees for oak restoration harvest scheduled to take place in 2011 near Goodweiler Lake east of Muscoda in the LWSR.

Formal inspections of the 2 earthen dams (flowage dikes) located in the Bakkens Pond Unit of the LWSR were completed during summer, and tree/brush removal from dike slopes took place this winter to ensure compliance with state dam standards. Damages to dike surfaces and spillways from wash-outs, flood-borne debris, and cattail mats following the September floods were completed by late October.

A long-term Cooperative Management Plan for the Class I Field Trial Grounds and Dog Training Area at the Mazomanie Unit of the LWSR is in final draft form and will soon be signed by the Mazomanie Grounds Association partner group

that assists wildlife staff with operations and maintenance of the grounds and facilities.

Boscobel Work Unit (Grant and Richland Counties) -- Fecon forestry mowers, along with chainsaws, herbicide and a lot of elbow grease, were used to remove or control invasive herbaceous and woody plants at numerous locations in the LWSR last fall and this winter including: 20 acres of brush and 7 acres of red cedar in the Millville Unit, 35 acres of brush in the Wyalusing Unit, 10 acres of brush and 3 acres of black locust in the Richwood Unit, and 6 acres of black locust in Boscobel Unit.

Following a very successful prescribed burn season during spring 2010, wildlife staff were able to conduct an additional burn of 80 acres last fall in the Blue River Unit, LWSR in addition to rotovating more than 9 miles of firebreaks in the LWSR and creating a new 10-acre burn unit on the Willow Creek Fishery Area in Richland County in preparation for the spring 2011 prescribed burn season.

Staff established a new 25-acre native prairie grass/forb planting at Millville Unit, LWSR to convert this site from a cool-season to warm-season vegetation type.

Repairs were made to the earthen dike at the Fish Trap Flowage in the Blue River Unit, LWSR following record flood levels in the Wisconsin River last September which caused wash-outs, flood-borne debris, cattail mats, and damage to spillways.

More than 2 miles of interior access roads and hunter walking trails were maintained in the Millville Unit and Boscobel Unit, LWSR.

The Knapp Creek Wildlife Area in southern Richland County includes several public hunting easements, and these properties were all posted during summer and fall to help identify areas open for public hunting.

Southwest Wisconsin Grassland and Stream Conservation Area (SWGSCA) -- The SWGSCA is a new landscape-scale project in southwest Wisconsin covering portions of 3 counties and encompassing 473,900 acres in the total project boundary. The total acquisition goal for the project is 12,000 acres, most of which will be acquired within 3 Bird Conservation Areas (BCA). Each BCA is approximately 10,000 acres with a 2,000-acre

core area for focused acquisition and management efforts.

Wildlife Biologist Maureen Rowe recently transferred from her former position as the Dane County Wildlife Biologist to become the biologist for the SWGSCA and is busy working with DNR staff and more than 20 partner groups to implement the goals and objectives of the project.

The first BCA, located in the eastern portion of the SWGSCA in southeast Dane County was approved in spring 2010, and 5 appraisal requests totaling 613 acres have been submitted to initiate land acquisitions in this area.

Delineation of the two remaining BCAs is nearly complete and will be ready for review and approvals by late February.

Darlington Work Unit (Lafayette and Southern Iowa Counties) -- Staff worked cooperatively with UW-Madison Landscape Architecture to establish experimental grazing paddocks to begin a 2-year study on the use of domestic goats for brush control on a 95-acre savanna restoration project at Yellowstone Wildlife Area. About ¾ mile of fencelines were cleared on Yellowstone Wildlife Area in advance of constructing new fences during spring 2011 for the experimental UW goat grazing project.

Staff assisted DNR Forestry to mark 65 acres of mixed conifer/hardwood on Yellowstone Wildlife Area as a potential woody bio-fuel harvest aimed at restoring native grasslands. Work is on-going with bio-fuel harvest contractors to bid this sale for 2011.

Fecon forestry mowers were used to clear 40 acres of brush and trees on Yellowstone Wildlife Area for savanna restoration using turkey stamp funds.

About ½ mile of boundary fencelines were cleared to prepare for boundary fence construction scheduled for spring, 2011.

Staff assisted DNR forestry with marking a 20-acre timber sale on Yellowstone Wildlife Area.

Wildlife staff worked with Lafayette County NRCS staff to re-establish contour strips on 300 acres of share-cropped fields on Yellowstone Wildlife Area.

Road access and parking areas on the Yellowstone Wildlife Area Rifle and Pistol Range were re-built

and re-graded. Range target backstop materials were provided to the Fayette Sportsman's Club, who manage the target range in cooperation with SCR wildlife, for re-construction of targets.

Wildlife staff mowed 2 miles of snowmobile trails on the Yellowstone Wildlife Area and applied herbicides to assist the Fayette Sno-Goers Snowmobile Club in their on-going maintenance of this portion of the Lafayette County trail system

Horicon Area

(Dodge and Jefferson Counties) activities included the following:

Horicon Education Center -- The Education Center hosted more than 9,000 people who came for education programs, public lectures, Movie Nights, Horicon Marsh Bird Club programs, Rock River Archeological Society programs and utilized the facility for meetings and conferences. SCR Wildlife Education staff conducted more than 120 education programs during 2010 and also expanded the education program.

We initiated a volunteer naturalist program whereby primarily retired teachers help to conduct education program activities for the larger groups. Staff wrote a grant for 40 pairs of snowshoes and developed a number of winter ecology programs to expand our "off-season" programs.

Among the special events we hosted were the Horicon Marsh Bird Festival (approximately 1,000 people attended), the Archeology and Indian History weekend and the 80th anniversary of Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area.

A number of developments took place at the Education Center in the past year, including installation of a wi-fi internet connection for the visiting public, development of a landscape plan, planting of wildflower garden, and development of the hiking trails around the Horicon Education Center.

Staff worked with Split Rock Studio to develop the concept plan for the exhibit at the Education Center. A series of development project requests have been submitted to complete the exhibits, the unfinished space in the lower level, a storage building, picnic shelter, observation blind, and floating deck and boardwalk on the marsh. These projects totaled about \$3 million.

The wildlife program depends upon partnerships to accomplish much of our work, and we have an outstanding partnership with the Friends of the Horicon Marsh International Education Center. Over the past years they have contributed about \$4 million towards education programs at the marsh including \$2 million for construction of the education center. They also contribute hundreds of hours of volunteer time each year and are active participants in most of the events held at Horicon, including the 80th Anniversary celebration, special art exhibits, staffing an information center to provide information on marsh activities to visitors, providing informational signs, operating a gift shop, and most recently organizing the first candlelight snowshoe hike at Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area with over 400 people attending. They are now expanding their role to include help with habitat and wildlife surveys.

Dodge County -- Horicon wildlife staff hosted the 80th Anniversary Celebration at Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area. It was a huge success!

Presentations on control of aquatic invasive species were given at the Wildlife Management



A boardwalk at Horicon Marsh

Statewide Conference in January and the DNR/US Fish and Wildlife Service Partnership Meeting. In addition, presentations on local wildlife topics were given during the Horicon Marsh Lecture Series, WDNR Law Enforcement Recruit Training and Rivers Edge Nature Center.

A Memorandum Of Agreement was signed with the USFWS and USACE to create a plan of action

for implementing long-term restoration of the Rock River Watershed and the Horicon Marsh.

Staff are working towards a NAWCA Phase II grant for Horicon Marsh with identified initiatives of land protection, invasive species management and water level management.

Two new water control structures were installed and draw-downs totaling 300 acres to facilitate moist soil management objectives on Wildlife Area flowages.

Horicon wildlife staff monitored use of 60 wood duck boxes, erected an osprey platform (winter 2010), and restored heron rookery structures on Horicon WA (winter 2009);

Staff coordinated the 2010/11 trapping auction partnering with USFWS - Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (> 100 in attendance) on Horicon Marsh (7 trapping units on the Horicon WA were auctioned for a total of \$3,500 dollars).

About 350 acres of cattails were treated, utilizing herbicide with aerial spraying, to create more open water habitat on the Horicon Wildlife Area.

Wildlife staff conducted hunter waterfowl bag checks and took samples for Avian Influenza testing during the opening weekend of the waterfowl season.

Staff attended Safe Capture International training to become certified in wildlife chemical immobilization techniques and also attended moist soil management and waterfowl management workshops.

Staff provided assistance with knowledge and operation on the Rush Lake re-channelization project with Marsh Master equipment. Staff also provided assistance to the USFWS banding cormorants in the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge.

Glacial Habitat Restoration Area (GHRA) -- More than 200 acres of native grassland were planted recently in the GHRA. Also, 90 acres of wetlands, at 15 separate project sites, were restored in the GHRA.

GHRA wildlife staff partnered with Fox Valley Technical College to conduct topographic surveys on 21 GHRA properties to determine the potential for wetland restoration. Thirty-five potential

wetland restoration projects were identified and mapped. In addition, staff designed a wetland aquatic invertebrate monitoring and sampling program for new wetland restoration sites.

Seven miles of old brushy fencelines and windbreaks were recently removed to reduce raptor perching areas to increase grassland bird nesting success on several native grasslands in the GHRA.

A total of 60 acres of reed canary grass were sprayed with herbicide at several research sites to test new control methods for this invasive plant species.

Jefferson County -- Timber harvests were recently completed on Lake Mills Wildlife Area (20 acres) and Rome Pond Wildlife Area (20 acres).

An 18-acre wetland basin was recently restored on the Rome Pond Wildlife Area.

Facon forestry mowers were used to remove invasive brush on 60 acres of a State Natural Area on Waterloo Wildlife Area as part of ongoing habitat improvements on the property.

Two water level control dams on Jefferson Marsh Wildlife Area were recently repaired to improve water level management capabilities.

More than 4 miles of dikes on the waterfowl refuge impoundments, Prince's Point Wildlife Area were recently repaired.

Twenty-two prothonotary warbler boxes were installed on Prince's Point Wildlife Area, and 64 wood duck boxes were maintained and monitored on Lake Mills Wildlife Area

Wildlife staff participated in Learn to Hunt programs with Milford Hills Hunt Club, and Grellton Sportsman's Club and gave presentations on wildlife management.

A new regulation established a 1:00 PM daily closure of waterfowl hunting on the Zeloski Marsh portion of the Lake Mills Wildlife Area last fall. The objective of this new regulation is to improve both hunting and wildlife watching opportunities. Contacts with property users and observations of wildlife use during fall hunting seasons indicate that the afternoon closure resulted in improved hunting conditions as well as wildlife watching opportunities. Staff plan to continue monitoring wildlife use and hunter success during fall 2011.